

large enough for three sets of square dancers to use it at one time. Places were chipped out of the sides of the cave by hand for two musicians to sit while they played for the dancers. Music was provided by a fiddler and Mark Richins playing the accordion. Richins was also hired to play nightly for George Tyng at the mines.

Clyde Burke, who has since passed away, told Walker his grandfather set up a refreshment stand in the smaller of the two caves which led to its eventual name of the "Beer Cave". Walker said that the life of the cave as a dance hall was short lived, and by the turn of the century had fallen into disrepair.

This site is located about 700 meters east or above the Timpanogos Cave visitor center on the right or south side of the road and across the river. Stop 100 to 200 meters beyond the bridge where you cross the creek for the first time above the cave parking lot. Then hop across the American Fork Creek and look for trails heading up-slope to the south. About 100 meters uphill is Dance Hall Cave and about another 100 meters to the west is the smaller Beer Cave. Both can be seen from the road, but you'll have to look for a wide place in the road to park.

The upper northeast end of the **North Fork** is not exactly under the shadow of Timp, but its mining history is closely linked to that of the lower American Fork Canyon. The discovery of silver, lead, and some gold in the area of Mineral Basin (directly south of Alta and Brighton, on the American Fork side) in 1870 filled the canyons with prospectors. According to George F. Shelley, the American Fork Mining District was organized July 21, 1870, with headquarters at what is known as **Mineral Basin**. The first mining claim was the Sunbeam Lode. Most of the ore bodies in the region were discovered between 1870 and 1905. More on mining below.

The history of transportation in American Fork Canyon is perhaps the most interesting part of the canyon's history. As previously mentioned, there was a very rough logging road up the canyon beginning after about 1851. However, when mining first got started in 1870, the ore wagons couldn't make it up or down the canyon on that rough track. It was up to the miners to build the first real road into the canyon. It went all the way from American Fork to Mineral Basin.

Keetch talks about the road this way. *The road took a great deal of maintenance to keep it open, so the users built a fence across the mouth of the canyon, put up a gate and charged fifty cents a wagon to travel the canyon. The money went to the caretaker of the road and it was his job to keep the road in good repair.* With increased mining activity in the canyon it became necessary to build a railroad to get the ore out.

The **American Fork Canyon Railroad**, like nearly all early railroads in Utah, was sponsored by the mining interests. During the late 1860's and early 1870's prospecting and opening of mining



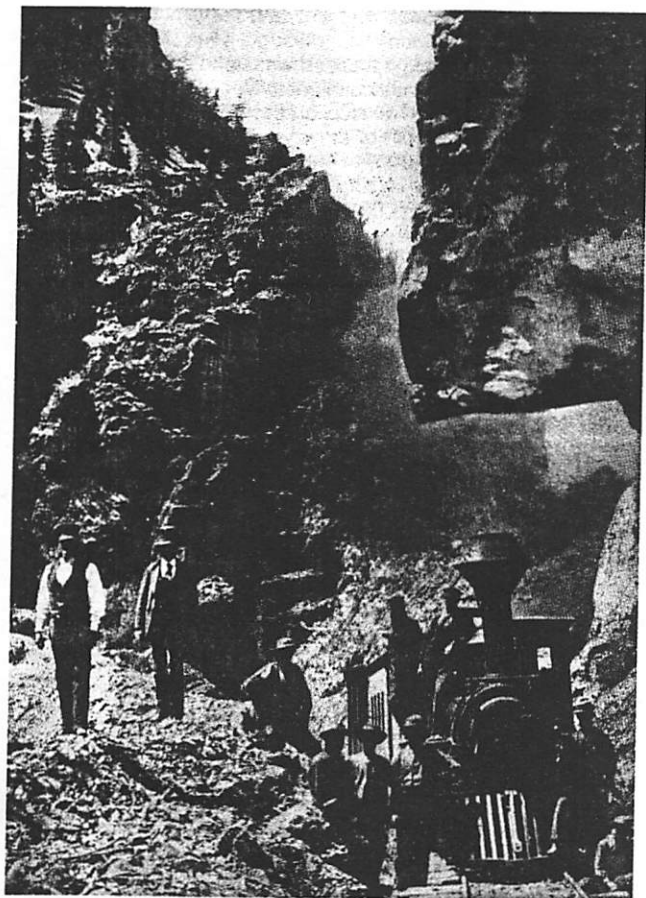
Beer Cave in the middle part of American Fork Canyon.

properties were taking place in the Bingham, Cottonwood, and American Fork Districts. Railroad connections were made to all of these sections by 1872.

The Utah Central Railroad was finished from Ogden to Salt Lake in 1870. It was then extended from Salt Lake south to Draper later the same year. From Draper, spurs were built to the Bingham and Cottonwood mining properties. Rich ore had been found in the American Fork Canyon district at this time and the Utah Southern Railroad was urged to continue its construction south as rapidly as possible to make connections at American Fork. The difficulties of grading and making cuts around the Point of the Mountain at Jordan Narrows held construction up for more than a year so that the railroad in American Fork Canyon was finished before the Utah Southern reached American Fork. Connection was made with this railroad at Lehi in 1872. The next year American Fork became the terminus and the American Fork Canyon Railroad built its switch-yards there.

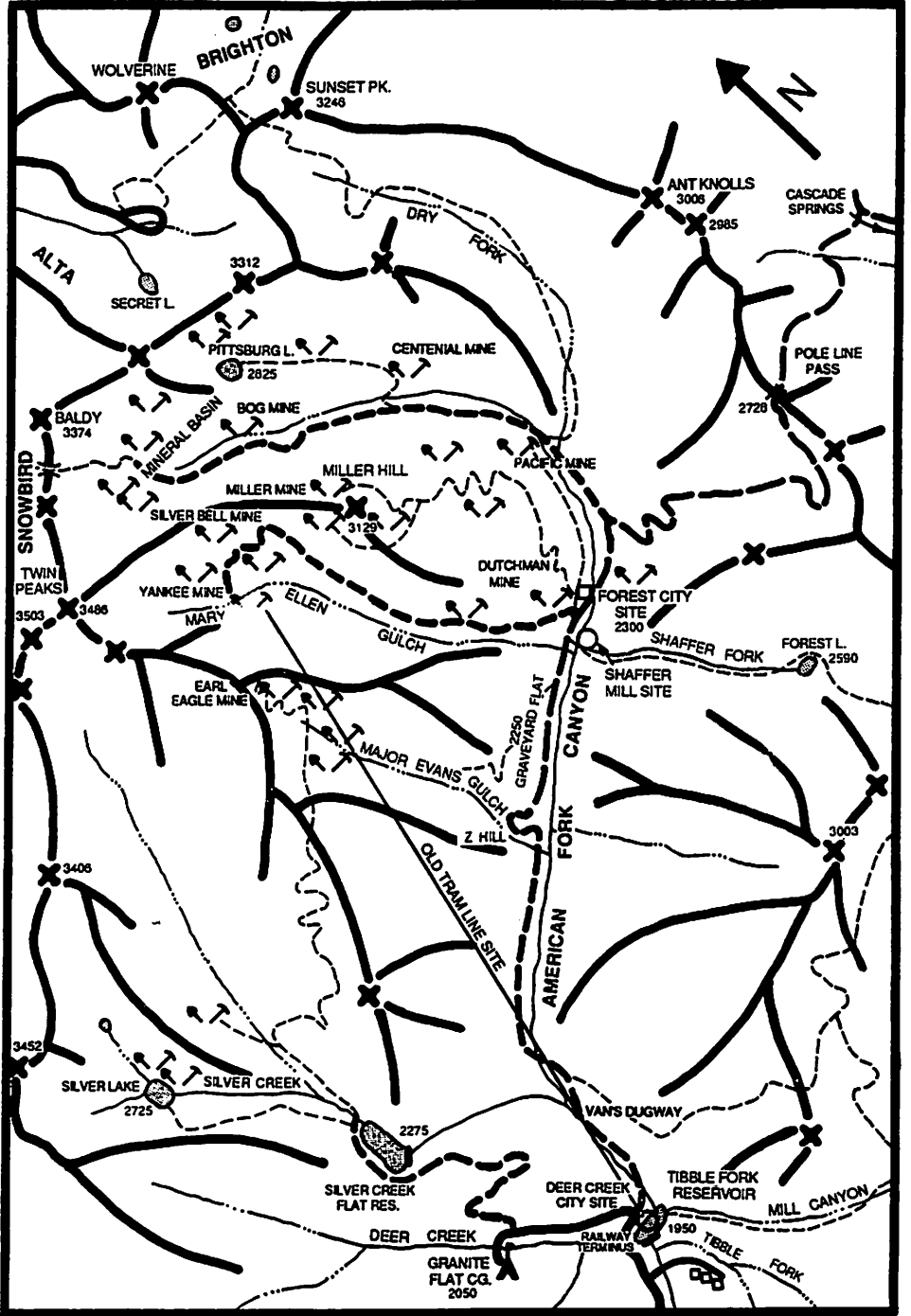
Since the narrow gauge American Fork Canyon Railroad was completed before the Utah Southern reached Utah County, it was necessary to transport the first engine and rolling stock overland from the terminus at Draper, a distance of 40 kms. Mr. Jacob Foutz and Hensen Walker of Pleasant Grove had contracted to do the work. A rather ingenious method was employed. Three teams of oxen furnished the pulling power. Three lengths of track were made and were laid down, the engine was pulled to the end of them, then two lengths were taken up and laid down again in front, and the process repeated. It took seven days to transport the engine from Draper to Lehi.

It was generally considered an impossible feat to build a railroad through the steep, narrow and rugged canyon, and several interesting bets were made that the enterprise would never be completed. Mayor Wilkes was given charge of the construction and a surveyor by the name of Fox staked the grade. The work was done by day labor, the wages being \$2.75 per ten hour day. The laborers were



The American Fork Canyon Railroad at Hanging Rock.
This foto was taken in about 1872.

MINING AREAS IN UPPER AMERICAN FORK CANYON



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railroad, showed heavy losses. In 1878, all was abandoned and the railroad was removed. The rails and rolling stock were sold to other railroad interests at Springville and the roadbed was used as a wagon road.

From 1872 to 1876 all traffic in the canyon went over the railroad, but the cash charged for all services and the scarcity of money caused considerable friction. In 1876, a wagon toll road was projected and started. When the railroad discontinued, a great portion of the grade was used by this new road. Not until 1906 was the road through American Fork Canyon made a public road, maintained by the county.

From 1880 to 1905 the mining of ore in Mineral Basin was quite slow. A number of people searched the area, but it wasn't until 1905 that more rich ore bodies were found. In that year George Tyng secured a lease from the Aspinwall Company in another location on Miller Hill and another good vein was uncovered.

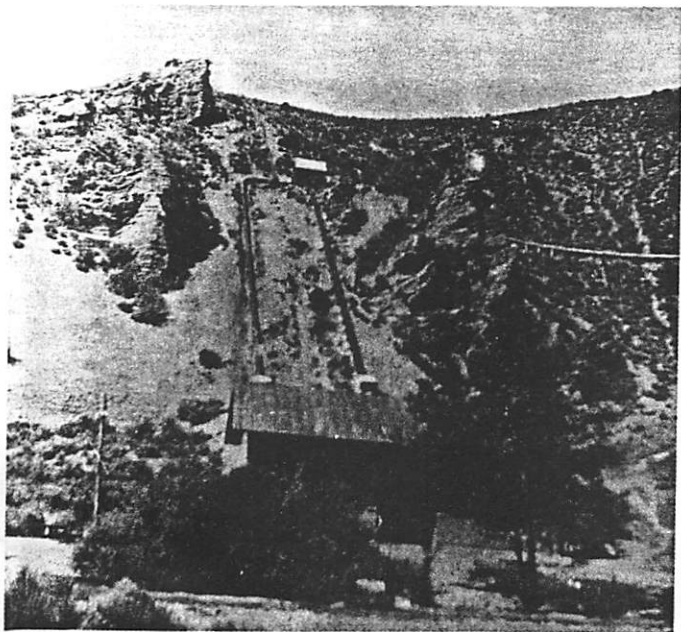
Keetch covered the history of Tyng like this. *For the next few years Miller Hill activity boomed. Mr. Tyng built a large boarding house for his miners and none but the best cooks were employed. This boarding house became the talk of the area and people traveled into the canyon just to stay at the Tyng house. Forty teams were kept busy hauling ore and supplies and 30 men were employed in a shift.*

At the height of the prosperity Mr. Tyng was killed in a snowslide. He had stepped from his cabin to one of the outbuildings and while he was there a slide passed over the building. According to the story, no great amount of property damage was done but a nail in one of the roof boards had been driven into Mr. Tyng's skull.

The body was hauled by sleigh to American Fork and embalmed. However, on opening the will it was found that he requested to be buried just below the boarding house on the brow of the hill. So eight teams of horses left American Fork and traveled the difficult road back to the mine, where the deep snow was cleared off the hill and a grave dug by the miners.

Today, high on a grassy slope stands a white picket fence around the grave of Mr. Tyng. The fence was originally put there by the family but over the years it fell apart. In 1965, the U. S. Forest Service placed a new picket fence around the grave of this early miner.

According to George F. Shelley's book, it was in 1897 the American Fork City council was petitioned to bring electricity to the town. About two years later, on June 6, 1899, the Garff Brothers began building a **hydroelectric power plant** at the mouth of American Fork Canyon. To make the venture cost effective, Pleasant Grove and Lehi were included. Each town put \$6000 into the operation.



The Lower American Fork Hydroelectric Power Station in the early 1900's.
It was removed in 1956.

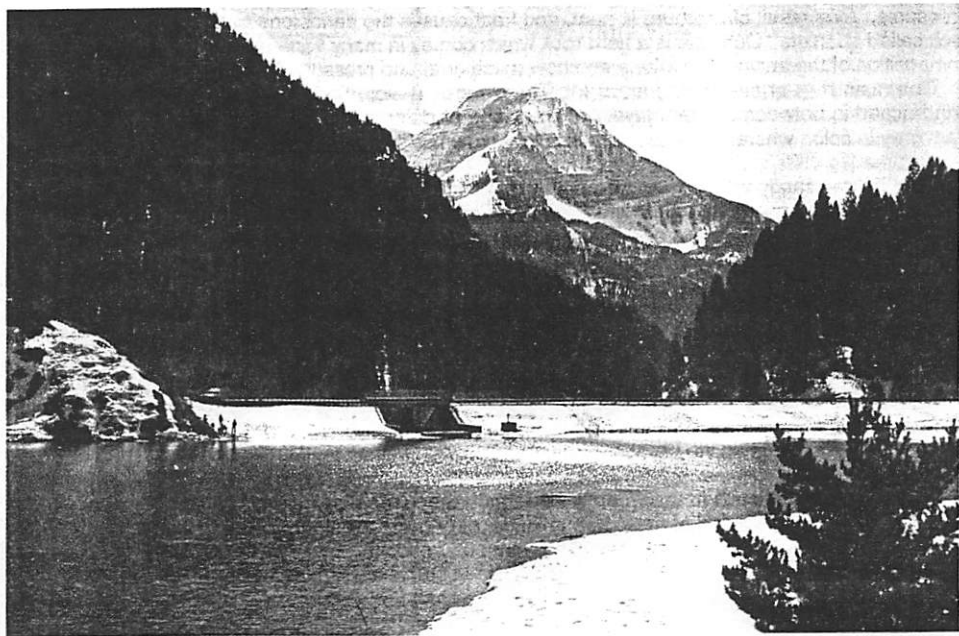
The electric project involved building a wooden dam about half way up the canyon, near what is today the Hanging Rock Picnic Site. An updated dam is still there today next to the road. A wooden pipeline was also constructed along the north side of the canyon wall. This pipeline took water to a point high above the mouth of the canyon. Immediately below was the power plant itself. This initial system was finished in early 1901. This plant became known as **American Fork Power Plant No. 1**, or the Lower Plant.

A few years later in 1907, a second plant was built about half way between the wooden dam and the Lower Plant. This was known as the **Upper American Fork Power Plant** or No. 2 Plant. This plant is still there day, but the lower one is gone. Right at the mouth of the canyon where the two highways meet, look to the north and you can still see remnants of the lower plant and the penstock's location.

In 1912, the Utah County Light & Power Company sold its interest to the Knight Consolidated Power Company. Later the same year, Utah Power & Light absorbed it into its own system. This was in the same time frame as when the Battle Creek, Nunns and Olmsted Hydroelectric Power Stations were sold by L.L. Nunn and the Telluride Power Company to UP&L. The Lower Plant had an old wooden flume and some ancient dynamos, so it became uneconomical to operate. It was dismantled in 1956, but the No. 2 Plant was renovated in 1954 and is still operating.

Throughout the years, recreation has been popular in American Fork Canyon. People would go the canyon, usually on weekend camping trips to fish or hunt, or just to picnic. As roads improved, more people went to the canyon. Much of the area of Mt. Timpanogos was first made into the Uintah Forest Reserve on February 22, 1897, but in those early days the Forest Service wasn't out building campgrounds.

It appears the first real effort to make campgrounds and other facilities in the canyon came in about 1921, when Forest crews built the Timpooneke Trail. Before that time the first guard station was built in South Fork, but in 1934, the one seen there today, was built by the CCC crews. In 1921 and 1922, the first trail to Timp Cave was built, opening up that area. In 1921, the Alpine Scenic Loop Road was upgraded to accommodated common cars, but it was rebuilt in the early 1930's, and totally paved in a few years later. This road's construction marked the beginning of summer time recreation in the canyon. Today there are about 8 campgrounds and one picnic site in American Fork Canyon area below Tibble Fork Reservoir.



The north slopes of North Peak, seen from Tibble Fork Reservoir.